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Identical letters dated 24 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I wish to draw your attention to the following information:

On the evening of 22 April 2013, an armed terrorist group belonging to the Nusra Front, an arm of Al-Qaida, abducted Archbishop Boulos Yaziji, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo and Iskandarun, and Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim, the Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo. As the two men were returning from a humanitarian mission, an armed group led by Chechen terrorists from the Nusra Front intercepted the car in which they were riding in western Aleppo, killed the deacon driving the car and proceeded to abduct the archbishops and take them to an unknown location.

This terrorist crime is yet another example of the extreme acts of terrorism that are being committed, with outside support, by the armed terrorist groups associated with the Nusra Front and its foreign mercenaries. Certain States in the region are abetting these terrorists' actions, which are based on tyrannical ideology and takfirist fatwas and are part of a plan to target the symbols of coexistence and tolerance. It is this very same plan to which the eminent religious scholar Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti recently fell victim.

The Syrian Arab Republic is determined to confront this organized takfirist terrorism that is aimed at its national unity and the cohesiveness of its society, which is rich in the cultural, religious, ethnic and social diversity that has characterized life in Syria for hundreds of years and has been one of the exemplars of peaceful coexistence in the region. It is motivated by the awareness of its people and their insistence on confronting the radical, schismatic ideology that the terrorist groups seek to spread, an ideology in which nothing is sacrosanct, including houses of worship, with all their historical and spiritual significance.

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Further to the letters it has addressed to the Security Council every time that the terrorists have perpetrated their crimes, which have not spared either ordinary Syrian citizens or the country's intellectual, political and religious figures, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again demands that the acts of terrorism being committed by these armed groups should be halted, and warns of the repercussions of such radical terrorism, the criminality of which knows no bounds. It trusts that the Council will issue a statement that clearly affirms the international community's rejection of these deplorable crimes and its determination to hold accountable their perpetrators and those who stand behind them, and calls on all States to honour their legal obligations not to provide any form of support for terrorism, regardless of where or when it occurs or the justifications offered.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that in order to arrive at a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians and led by Syrians, the violence being committed by the armed terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaida must be halted. This can be achieved by putting pressure on those States that are offering every form of support to those groups to desist from inciting violence and terrorism through the provision of material support and political and media cover for that purpose.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 105, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative